

Capturing the holiday season with one shot

Story by U.S. Air Force Maj. Richard C. Sater
Combined Joint Task Force 180

BAGRAM, Afghanistan – “Just like senior pictures.” More than one airman or Soldier made that remark on a recent weekend as they waited their turn to pose for digital Christmas portraits.

What better gift for family and friends in this computer age?

The set-up? Picture-perfect for a deployed location.

The “clamshell” aircraft maintenance hangar for the 455th Expeditionary Operations Group here transformed into a tactical studio.

Instead of an artificial backdrop, portrait subjects stood next to a genuine A-10 Thunderbolt II and a tan humvee, an American flag, and a Christmas tree decorated with lights and desert-brown Air Force insignia.

And the photographer, Air Force Tech. Sgt. Brian Davidson – public affairs chief for the 455th – wore a desert-camouflage battle-dress uniform as he snapped photo after photo for almost 16 hours over two days.

More than 250 airmen and Soldiers posed during the two long sessions – first come, first served.

Toward the end of each day, some waited more than an hour for their turn, but Davidson worked late both days, shooting more than 3,000 photos.

Part of his job involved getting the subjects to be natural before the camera. Davidson offered jokes and encouragement.

“Show some teeth!” he urged. Some-



Courtesy photo

Air Force Tech. Sgt. Brian Davidson, public affairs chief for the 455th, wore a desert-camouflage battle-dress uniform as he snapped photo after photo for almost 16 hours for two days.

times a simple prop – like a red Santa hat – was enough to get a nervous airman or Soldier to relax and even smile.

Doug Dotson, an Air Force Civilian Augmentee Program air traffic controller, served as the photography assistant.

“Brian put out the word that he needed help,” Dotson said, and he was one of the first to volunteer. During the photo shoot, he adjusted the lighting and posed the subjects.

“Square your shoulders!” he said. “Chin up! Look at me!”

With no photography experience except “years of family pictures,” he said, he nonetheless proved himself a resourceful assistant.

Davidson shot a dozen or more images of his subjects and then handed them the digital flashcard containing the

images.

Another volunteer – Master Sgt. Darrell Mahan of the 355th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Ariz. – served as the photo technician, calling up the images on a laptop computer so everyone could review the digital proofs and select favorite poses.

Later, Davidson did a little digital retouching and then downloaded the individual shots by name to a shared drive available online.

Subjects could access the photos, send them by e-mail, or save them to a CD. (Recipients at home have the option of making prints themselves or taking the images to a professional photo shop for high-quality prints.)

See **SNAP**, Page 4

World News (Compiled from CNN.com)



Time's cover shows three American military personnel representing the American soldier.

American Soldier selected as Time Person of the Year

(CNN) – Time magazine has named “the American soldier” as its Person of the Year of 2003.

The magazine’s editors said it was clear from the start of their decision process that Iraq was the top story — and from that — several candidates emerged, including President Bush, Saddam Hussein, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and his deputy, Paul Wolfowitz.

But the editors’ debate made something else very clear — no matter what any of the political movers and shakers had done or would do in the future, it would be U.S. forces who bore the brunt of those decisions.

“Scholars can debate whether the Bush Doctrine is the most muscular expression of national interest in a half-century; the generals may ponder whether warmaking or peacekeeping is the more fearsome assignment; civilians will remember a winter wrapped in yellow ribbons and duct tape,” writer Nancy Gibbs said in the magazine.

“In a year when it felt at times as if we had nothing in common anymore, we were united in this hope: that our men and women at arms might soon come safely home, because their job was done,” Gibbs wrote. “They are the bright, sharp instrument of a blunt policy, and success or failure in a war unlike any in history ultimately rests with them.”

Gen. Richard Myers, chairman of the U.S. joint chiefs of staff, said on “Fox News Sunday” that the selection was “exactly right.”

“They’re doing a terrific job, and we’re going to have to use them probably for some time to come,” he said.



Dinner by candlelight at Original Joes on Taylor Street in San Francisco.

San Francisco blackout leaves thousands in dark

SAN FRANCISCO – Tens of thousands of customers remained without power Sunday following a massive blackout that disrupted traffic, shut down transit stations, and at its height left a third of the city without electricity on one of the busiest days of the holiday season.

The power outage started just before 6 p.m. Saturday when a fire erupted at a major Pacific Gas & Electric Co. substation that feeds smaller neighborhood substations.

The cause of the fire and outage remained under investigation, PG&E officials said.

“There’s no indication that it was vandalism or sabotage. As far as the exact cause, we just don’t know yet,” utility spokesman Jonathan Franks said.

About 24,000 remained without power by late Sunday afternoon.

Lebanon jails 26 over bombings

BEIRUT, Lebanon – Lebanon sentenced 26 men to between three months and 20 years in prison on Saturday over a string of bomb attacks on U.S. restaurants and an alleged plot to assassinate the U.S. ambassador, judicial sources said.

Another man was sentenced in absentia to life imprisonment with hard labor, while eight more were acquitted, they said.

The Lebanese and Palestinian men had been arrested after a rash of small attacks on fast food restaurants including McDonald’s and Pizza Hut, which peaked at the height of the three-year-old Palestinian uprising against Israeli occupation

and the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq.

Lebanese authorities cracked the cell after a booby-trapped car was found outside McDonald’s in Beirut in April. It failed to explode.

Four of the group were convicted of plotting to kill U.S. ambassador Vincent Battle but the court waived their penalties since the plan was never put into action, the sources said.



U.S. troops, which routed more than 100 insurgents in overnight raids, check cars in Fallujah.

U.S. launches anti-insurgent op.

BAGHDAD, Iraq – U.S. troops overnight launched a new operation targeting anti-coalition insurgents, the military said Sunday, capturing more than 100 enemy personnel and confiscating arms caches.

The U.S. Army’s 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment launched Operation Rifles Fury on Sunday, joining the 82nd Airborne’s Task Force All American, the 4th Infantry Division’s Operation Iron Horse and other units chasing insurgents, a military spokeswoman said.

Operating in western Iraq near the border with Syria, Operation Rifles Fury also will “destroy terrorist training camps in the Rawah area,” the spokeswoman said.

Meanwhile, a week after the United States announced that it had captured Saddam Hussein, U.S. Joint Chiefs Chairman Richard Myers told CNN’s “Late Edition” that the toppled Iraqi leader “was not being cooperative, ... defiant is probably a good word.”

Documents in Saddam’s possession at the time of his arrest, however, were providing insight into the Iraqi insurgent movement, according to the chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee.

Anti-insurgent patrols and searches by the 82nd Airborne captured 96 “terrorists.”



The Soldier's Creed

I am a Soldier.

I am a Warrior and a member of a team. I serve the people of the United States and live the Army Values.

I will always place the mission first.

I will never accept defeat.

I will never quit.

I will never leave a fallen comrade.

I am disciplined, physically and mentally tough, trained and proficient in my warrior tasks and drills. I always maintain my arms, my equipment and myself.

I am an expert and I am a professional.

I stand ready to deploy, engage, and destroy the enemies of the United States of America in close combat.

I am a guardian of freedom and the American way of life.

I am an American Soldier.

SNAP, from Page 1

The airmen and Soldiers may have been self-conscious about posing for the camera, but all seemed enthusiastic about the results.

“It’s great,” said Senior Airman Missy Mantegna, personnel specialist with the 355th Component Maintenance Squadron, Davis-Monthan. “Sergeant Davidson devoted a lot of his time” to the project. She sent her portraits home right away by e-mail, an unexpected gift just in time for the holidays.

“My family loves the pictures,” she said.

That’s what Davidson had in mind. As chief of public affairs for the 455th EOG, he’s more accustomed to taking action photos to accompany feature stories.

But he wanted to do something special for the troops far away from home for the holidays and decided to set up an improvised portrait studio.

“I got the idea from my grandfather,” he said. During World War II, his grandfather, Pat Spano, served in the Army Air Corps as a combat photographer. “He used to take portraits of the troops so they could send them home for Christmas.”

Photography is “something we have in common,” Davidson said.

Spano had shown some of his black-and-white photographs with his grandson; upon returning home, Davidson looks forward to sharing some of his own digital images with his grandfather.

Spano, who’d earned the rank of staff sergeant by the time he was discharged after the war, currently resides in Tucson, Ariz., close to Davidson’s regular duty assignment, the 355th Wing at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, also in Tucson.

Davidson declared himself pleased with the results of his improvised studio.

“Good for morale,” he said. And his images, capturing a fraction of a second in the lives of airmen and Soldiers serving in Afghanistan for Operation Enduring Freedom, will provide lasting memories too.

Bagram Air Base MWR presents

“Hulk”

1530Z at the MWR building:

A geneticist’s experimental accident curses him with the tendency to become a powerful giant green brute under emotional stress.



Tomorrow’s movie:

“Indiana Jones Trilogy”

Local weather

TWO-DAY REGIONAL WEATHER FORECAST:

Today

Tuesday

Uzbekistan:

Mostly Cloudy

Partly Cloudy

H: 46F

H: 46F

L: 23F

L: 21F

Bagram:

Rain

Mostly Clear

H: 59F

H: 57F

L: 37F

L: 41F

Kabul:

Rain

Mostly Clear

H: 41F

H: 45F

L: 24F

L: 21F

Kandahar:

Dusty

Dusty

H: 30F

H: 36F

L: 23F

L: 26F

Weather forecast courtesy of the Bagram Combat Weather Team

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CJTF-180 Commander —

Brig. Gen. (P) Lloyd J. Austin III

CJTF-180 Command Sergeant Major —

Command Sgt. Maj. Dennis Carey

Public Affairs Officer —

Lt. Col. Bryan Hilferty

Public Affairs Sergeant Major —

Master Sgt. Sharon Opeka

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Commander — Maj. Matthew L. Garner

NCOIC — Staff Sgt. Keith Thompson

Editor — Sgt. Stephanie Hall

Journalists — Staff Sgt. Johnny A. Thompson,

Sgt. Gregory Heath, Spc. Kelly Hunt

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Coalition Sports Zone

(Compiled from SI.com)



Corey Simon levels 49ers quarterback Jeff Garcia.

49ers snap Eagles' nine-game streak

PHILADELPHIA – Forget home-field advantage throughout the NFC playoffs. The Philadelphia Eagles have to win the division first.

Tony Parrish's second interception set up a 22-yard field goal by Todd Peterson in overtime, helping the San Francisco 49ers snap the Eagles' nine-game winning streak, 31-28 on Sunday.

The Eagles (11-4) still can clinch their third consecutive NFC East title and secure a first-round bye with a victory over Washington next Saturday. However, if they lose and Dallas (10-5) beats New Orleans on Sunday, the Cowboys win the division.

To get the No. 1 seed, Philadelphia needs to beat the Redskins and have St. Louis (12-3) lose at Detroit next Sunday.

"It's very disappointing, but we have to focus on the next game," Eagles quarterback Donovan McNabb said.

The 49ers (7-8) lost Pro Bowl wide receiver Terrell Owens to a broken left collarbone in the first half, but snapped an eight-game road losing streak.

St. John's falls to No. 5 Georgia Tech

ATLANTA – Try as they might, the St. John's players just couldn't win one for their coaches – the old one or the new one.

B.J. Elder scored 11 of his 15 points in the second half and No. 5 Georgia Tech beat the Red Storm 79-66 Sunday, just two days after Kevin Clark replaced Mike Jarvis as coach.

"Coach Jarvis was a great coach," St. John's forward Grady Reynolds said. "We wanted to win this game for him."

Jarvis was fired Friday, only six games into his sixth season. St. John's (2-5) lost four of its first five games, which hadn't happened since 1922-23, and even a victory over St. Francis, N.Y., in his final game wasn't enough to save Jarvis' job.

"I thought today was a terrific effort by the St. John's men's basketball team," Clark, the interim coach, said. "They showed tremendous character against an excellent Georgia Tech basketball team, against a lot of adversity.

Saints lose on Carney's missed PAT

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. – The only thing missing was the band ... and the extra point.

The New Orleans Saints scored a 75-yard touchdown on one of the wackiest plays in NFL history Sunday, then – just as unbelievably – John Carney missed the PAT with no time left.

The result was a 20-19 loss to the Jacksonville Jaguars that dropped the Saints out of the playoff race.

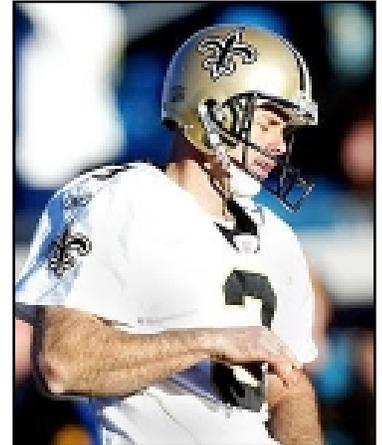
It will surely go down as one of the most twisted, cruel moments in the 37-year history of the star-struck franchise.

"This seems to be, as far as kickers are concerned, as bad as it gets," Carney said.

The Saints (7-8), coming off Joe Horn's cell phone shenanigans last week, looked like they had a play, a moment, to put that whole episode behind them. Instead, they'll have the whole offseason to wonder about what might have been.

"This is awful," said Saints receiver Michael Lewis, who was in on the play. "I can't explain how it feels to go from one emotion to the other."

With six seconds left and the Saints trailing 20-13, Aaron Brooks passed to Donte' Stallworth, who flipped the ball to Lewis. He pitched back to Deuce McAllister, who lateraled to Jerome Pathon, who went the final 21 yards and dove in for the score.



John Carney's extra point went wide right, ending the Saints' playoff hopes.

Barrett traded to A's, then to Cubs

CHICAGO – The Chicago Cubs cleared up their logjam at catcher Sunday, signing Michael Barrett and then trading veteran Damian Miller and cash to the Oakland Athletics.

The deal ends a whirlwind week for Barrett, who was on three teams in six days. The Montreal Expos traded him to Oakland on Monday, and the A's turned around and shipped him to Chicago on Tuesday.

"We've always liked him," Cubs general manager Jim Hendry said. "Dick Pole was the pitching coach in Montreal in 2002, and Dick has spoken very highly of him."

Barrett, 27, made \$2.6 million last season, a year in which he played only 70 games because of injuries. He was eligible for arbitration, but the Cubs wanted him to take a pay cut. He couldn't take more than a 20 percent reduction without first becoming a free agent, though.

So the Cubs didn't offer him a contract by Saturday night's deadline, making him a free agent, and he then signed a one-year deal for \$1.55 million.

Afghanistan Hot Topics



(Compiled by CJTF-180 Public Affairs)

At least seven Afghan troops die in raids blamed on Taliban guerrillas

SPIN BOLDAK, Afghanistan (*Reuters*) – At least seven Afghan soldiers were killed and several wounded in two separate attacks blamed on Taliban guerrillas in the volatile south and east of the country, officials said on Sunday.

The worst attack occurred on Saturday night in Shehroba, about 12 miles from Spin Boldak close to Pakistani border.

Taliban Commander Mullah Rehmattullah told Reuters that all nine Afghan soldiers at the post were killed in the attack, in which the guerrillas used heavy machine guns and hand grenades. He said no Taliban soldiers were killed.

But a deputy police chief of Spin Boldak, who did not want to be named, said five Afghan soldiers were killed and a government commander, Naik Mohammad, was wounded.

He added that after the attack the Taliban retreated to nearby mountains and Afghan forces began to hunt them down.

According to General Khan Mohammad Khan Mujahid, a senior military commander in Kandahar province where Spin Boldak is located, members of the ousted Taliban were responsible for an attack launched from the Pakistani side of the border.

Afghan authorities accuse Pakistan of not doing enough to crack down on Taliban, al Qaeda and allied Islamic militants on its soil who have been blamed for a wave of violence in Afghanistan since August that has claimed over 400 lives.

Saturday's raid follows a short period of relative calm across the country, coinciding with a major operation by U.S. forces to silence the rebels during a key assembly in Kabul that will finalize the country's constitution.

One eyewitness of the attack, Shahid Aslam Jan, said he heard a big explosion at around 10 p.m. (12:30 p.m. EST) followed by a number of small explosions.

"The sound of gunfire and explosions continued for around five hours. Afterwards the Afghan soldiers arrived and started searching houses for any Taliban who might be hiding there."

In a separate incident, two government soldiers were killed late on Saturday when a vehicle in a military convoy was blown up by a suspected remote controlled device along the road linking Khost in the east to the capital Kabul.

The road had been used by members of the 12,000-strong U.S. force earlier in the day, witnesses said.

"Two soldiers lost their lives and two others have been injured who are being treated in hospital. The Taliban were behind this incident," said General Kheyal Baaz Khan, a key military commander in Khost.

Blast in eastern Afghan city kills man

PESHAWAR, Pakistan (*AP*) – A bomb ripped through a square lined by restaurants and shops in eastern Afghanistan, killing one man and injuring another, a security official said Sunday.

No one claimed responsibility for the explosion late Saturday but officials routinely blame al Qaeda and Taliban forces for attacks in the area.

The blast shattered windows in nearby buildings in Talashi square in central Jalalabad, the capital of Afghanistan's eastern Nangarhar province.

The unidentified man died of shrapnel wounds, said Gen. Sayed Aghan Saqib, commander of an Afghan military brigade in the city, which is near the Pakistani border.

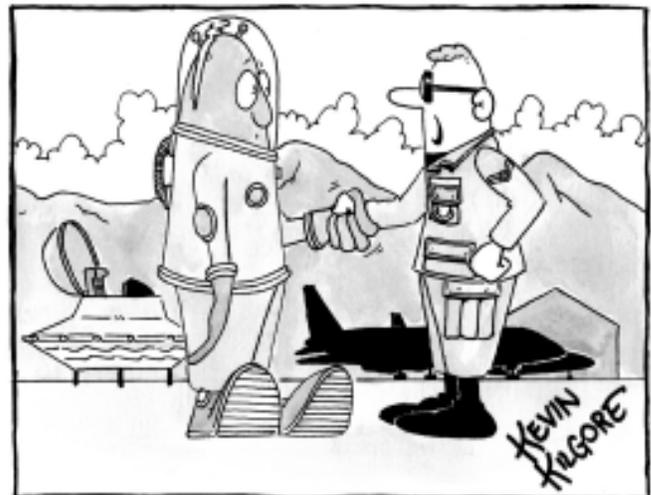
No arrests have been made in the attack, Saqib said by satellite telephone.

"The Taliban and al Qaeda are carrying out these terrorist acts," Saqib said.

A U.S.-led coalition of forces ousted the Taliban militia in late 2001 for harboring al Qaeda, blamed for the Sept. 11 attacks in the United States.

Last Sunday, a bomb exploded outside the office of a women's organization in Jalalabad, damaging a wall and shattering windows of the Afghan Women's Peace Committee office. Last month, a bomb exploded near a hospital and killed a teenager.

**"You must be from the 310th
Space Group."**



kevin_kilgore@hotmail.com

By Kevin Kilgore

Laugh Support